



Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee

22 June 2023

Minutes of the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee held on Friday 31
March 2023
via MS Teams

Committee Members present:	Mary Pitcaithly (Committee Chair) Katharina Kasper (Items 2-3) Grant Macrae Catriona Stewart
Committee Member apologies:	Paul Edie
In attendance:	<u>Scottish Police Authority</u> Lynn Brown, Chief Executive Officer John McNellis, Head of Finance, Audit and Risk Graham Stickle, Audit and Risk Lead <u>Police Scotland</u> David Page, Deputy Chief Officer James Gray, Chief Financial Officer Tom McMahon, Director of Strategy and Analysis Patrick Brown, Head of Finance Alastair Corfield, Financial Controller Chief Superintendent Gillian Docherty Gary Waltret, Head of Purchasing Operations and Logistics Paul Stewart, People Services Manager

	<p><u>Forensic Services</u> Alan Connell, Head of Forensic Infrastructure and Support</p> <p><u>Grant Thornton</u> Joanne Brown, Partner, Audit – Public Sector</p> <p><u>Azets</u> Gary Devlin, Head of Internal Audit Rachael Weir, Senior Audit Manager</p> <p><u>HMICS</u> Alan Wright</p> <p><u>SPA Secretariat</u> Karen Vallance, Governance Support Officer</p>
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1. WELCOME AND STANDING ITEMS

The Committee Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees, confirming Grant Macrae would Chair the meeting should she be disconnected from the call.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- **NOTE** apologies from Paul Edie;
- **NOTE** no declarations of interest;
- **ADOPT** the Minute of the 17 January 2023 meeting;
- **NOTE** the action log;
- **AGREE** that, in accordance with paragraph 20 of the SPA Standing Orders, the Committee would consider items 4 and 5 in private for the reasons set out on the agenda.

2. INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTING

2.1 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORTS

Members considered two new internal audit reports on Police Scotland compliance and staff absence and modified duties.

Police Scotland Compliance

Rachel Weir highlighted a number of key points and the recommendations as detailed within the report.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- Chief Superintendent Gillian Docherty confirmed management had already identified areas of weakness, and there was now strategic ownership and a tactical lead. A short life working group had been established with work ongoing to address the high and very high recommendations. Progress will be reported to the SLWG as well as an end to end process review.
- Members were informed that work would be prioritised from a control perspective.
- Members sought assurance that all recommendations can be dealt with within a reasonable timeframe, and heard that the timescale of January 2024 was to allow a quality and robust governance process to be put in place. Noting that PAVA comes under firearm legislation, Members agreed the importance for a balance to be struck between ensuring processes were dealt with correctly but completed in a timely manner. As such, the Committee Chair requested Police Scotland review the delivery milestones for PAVA management actions, and advise the Committee whether there are opportunities to resolve actions and associated risk earlier.
- Members were informed that the issues raised were reflective of challenges faced during the transition between moving from local policing ownership to a civilian professional long term capability.
- Members were assured that Police Scotland will have their own audit capability in the department to allow for compliance checks including randomised spot checks.
- Members heard the reported timeline was reflective of available resources, and were assured that it would be a financial priority as this was a legislative requirement.
- Members were informed the report was commissioned so that management could have an independent view that was quantifiable to ensure an appropriate response.
- Members sought confirmation on whether compliance issues identified in the report are recorded on Police Scotland's risk register.

Staff Absence and Modified Duties

Gary Devlin (GDevlin) highlighted a number of key points as detailed within the report.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

OFFICIAL

- Members were concerned that current training did not cover attendance management but were assured this would be rectified by a new people manager development programme for all line managers. It is due to launch Q1 of 2023/24 and covers a comprehensive range of aspects of people management skills, policies and practices. Members heard the programme was not being established in direct response to the Internal Audit report but will respond to the issues raised.
- Members sought information on what impact will be seen following implementation of recommendations, and heard that Police Scotland are moving away from setting absence targets due to the uniqueness of the service. Members were however assured that modified duties was a long term area of focus and work is being progressed through the Strategic Workforce Plan refresh to ensure better categorisation.
- The Committee Chair requested that the report be provided to People Committee Members, for their information.
- Members were advised that the Short Life Working Group is still in place.
- Members requested consideration to be given on whether 'other' category for estimated hours to miscellaneous category (page 34 of report) can be broken down further by reason but also by location / business area to establish local variations and trends.
- Members were assured resource to address recommendations would be prioritised as the outcome would hopefully generate more capacity.
- Members were reminded that follow up work on recommendations would be reported within future quarterly reports.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- **NOTE** the report.
- **AGREE** the following actions:

David Page and ACC Alan Speirs to review the delivery milestones for PAVA management actions and advise Members if there are opportunities to resolve actions and associated risk earlier.

20230331-AUD-001

Confirmation to be sought on whether compliance issues identified in the report are recorded on Police Scotland's risk register.

20230331-AUD-001

Consideration to be given on whether 'other' category for estimated hours to miscellaneous category (page 34 of staff absence and modified duties report) can be broken down further by reason but also by location/ business area to establish local variations and trends.

20230331-AUD-001

Internal Audit Report on staff absence and modified duties to be provided to People Committee Members.

20230331-AUD-001

2.2 EXTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL PLAN

Members considered the report which provides an overview of the planned scope and timing of the statutory audit of the SPA. Joanne Brown (JBrown) highlighted a number of key points as detailed within the report.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- John McNellis confirmed SPA have worked with Grant Thornton to input into risk and scope findings, and were agreeable to the audit timeline.
- Members sought information on additional work required in respect of valuation of land and buildings. James Gray advised Police Scotland have a rolling programme for re-evaluation of land and buildings and whilst it was recognised as being raised as a significant audit risk, Police Scotland were ready to provide whatever information was required. JBrown added that there had been good discussions on approach to re-evaluation and was a very specific area of focus compared to previous External Auditors.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- **NOTE** the report.

3. AUDIT, RISK AND ASSURANCE COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

Members were presented with the work plan which proposed Committee items for the next 12 months, noting that the Internal Audit Report on Forensic Services Data Management would instead be presented to the May Committee meeting.

Members heard BDO would confirm when the reports on Best Value Readiness and Grievance Processes would be completed and reported.

GDevlin confirmed that as there had been some red risk findings, it will translate to an audit opinion that is an 'except for' audit opinion.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

- **NOTE** the plan.

end

